



A guide to...

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Across the Assessment Lifecycle



# Contents



## **Introduction**

Page 4



## **DE&I in test development**

Page 10



## **DE&I in test booking and delivery**

Page 18



## **Continuous improvements to DE&I**

Page 26



## **Marketing for DE&I**

Page 30



## **Ask your testing provider about their own DE&I**

Page 32



## **Conclusion**

Page 36

**In the testing industry, we need a  
united vision and shared commitment  
to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I).**

We must work together – and work harder – to ensure  
all groups have access to fair testing.

**Lack of DE&I  
in testing**



**Wider social  
justice issue**

# What does DE&I in testing look like?

---



## **For diversity...**

Develop tests that allow for diverse backgrounds and experiences.



## **For equity...**

Remove all unnecessary barriers, so every test taker is treated fairly.



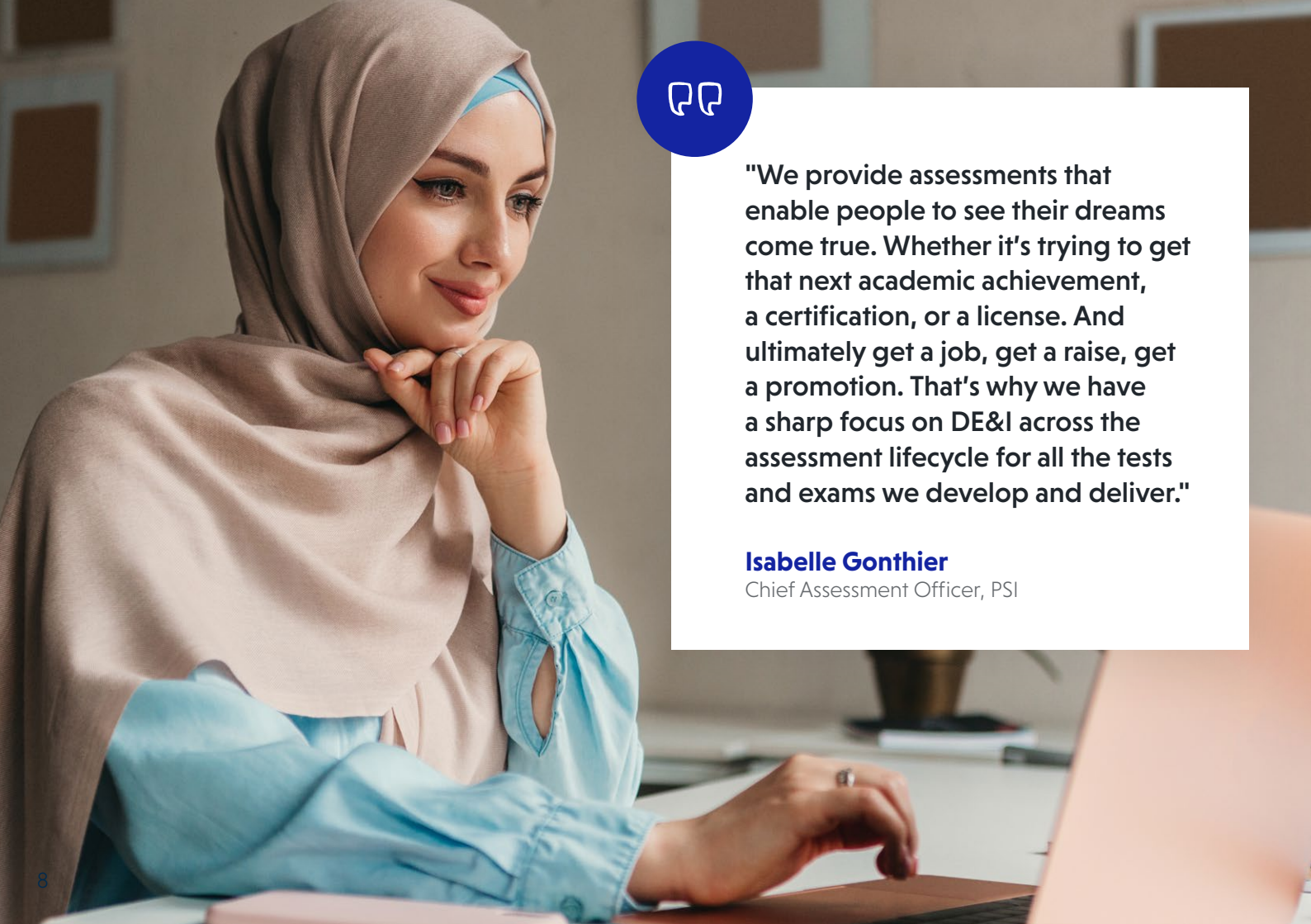
## **For inclusivity...**

Ensure tests are accessible to all, so no test taker is advantaged or disadvantaged.

# Why does DE&I **matter** in testing?

- ✓ The tests we deliver **change lives**. They should allow individuals from diverse backgrounds to start or progress in their chosen career or specialty.
- ✓ We have a wider **social responsibility**. We need to develop and deliver fair tests that are inclusive and accessible to everyone.
- ✓ Our tests must be **legally defensible**. They need to be compliant with relevant legislative or regulatory requirements related to DE&I.
- ✓ You want to **grow your market**. The more accessible your tests are to those from marginalised and underserved communities, the more test takers you will reach.





"We provide assessments that enable people to see their dreams come true. Whether it's trying to get that next academic achievement, a certification, or a license. And ultimately get a job, get a raise, get a promotion. That's why we have a sharp focus on DE&I across the assessment lifecycle for all the tests and exams we develop and deliver."

**Isabelle Gonthier**

Chief Assessment Officer, PSI



**Of course, to be meaningful and effective any stated commitment to DE&I needs to be baked into your culture – and the culture of your testing provider.**

This means a commitment to focus on tangible practices and demonstrable behaviours that are more than just a single assessment or one-off seminar.



**Equally, considerations for DE&I initiatives cannot be limited to a single timepoint in the assessment lifecycle. They must be continually integrated across the whole assessment lifecycle.**

# DE&I in test development



Bias in test content can come from many sources, such as use of irrelevant language, cultural nuances, and regional differences. For your tests to be valid, your content must be equally accessible to all eligible test takers.

What's more, biased test content means unreliable outcomes that aren't an accurate reflection of the competence of your test taker.



"Thinking about the ultimate user when developing a test is critically important. And then every step of the way is essential in making the testing experience valid, reliable and fair – because of the importance of the outcomes for the test taker."

**Pamela Ing Stemmer**

Senior Director, Psychometric Services, PSI





## Working with Subject Matter Experts

When members of a test development team partner with a testing organisation and their Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to develop test content, DE&I should always be front of mind. For example, how content experts are writing and reviewing the items is important to ensure they are fair and unbiased. This includes gender, racial, cultural and background bias.

Consider **three key areas** in the test development process:

1



## SME recruitment and selection

of a diverse and  
representative group of SMEs.  
Including but not limited to:



Diversity of demographic  
characteristics  
(race / ethnicity / gender identity).



Diversity of practice area  
or specialty.



Diversity of experience level  
(avoid the tendency to only  
recruit / select long-time  
practitioners – the voice of the  
newer practitioner is important).

2



## SME training

for item writers and reviewers, with discussions around important guidelines, best practice and requirements that adhere to DE&I principles. For example:



Encourage item writers and reviewers to acknowledge their own blind spots and foster a commitment to sensitivity and continuous improvement.

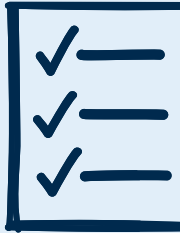


In item scenarios, using objective descriptions of individuals portrayed in the item.



Avoiding unnecessary reference to gender or race / ethnicity e.g., use “patient with limited English proficiency” rather than “patient of Middle Eastern descent”.

3



## Item development checklist

that support SMEs to adhere to DE&I guidelines and principles throughout the process. For example:

- ☒ Gender balancing across items.
- ☒ Genderless items.
- ☒ Universal scenarios.
- ☒ No slang or idioms.



"If we want to achieve our DE&I goals, there needs to be an understanding of why it's important. In healthcare, for instance, an item could refer to a white man presenting with a certain medical condition. Consequently, a black woman presenting to the test taker in the future with that same condition might be less likely to get an accurate diagnosis. That's potentially life changing."

**Shebba E. Toussaint**

Senior Director, Client Services, PSI





## PSI has the industry's most experienced leadership

of in-house Psychometricians, Test Developers and Data Forensics experts.

What's more, our Content Science team members are engaged in...

18 different committees, across 7 testing industry organisations.

For example, we share and learn DE&I best practice with:

Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) DE&I Committee

Association of Test Publishers (ATP) DE&I in Testing Committee

Council of Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) DE&I Committee



# DE&I in **test booking and delivery**

**Your test takers have worked hard and they deserve a secure, seamless and equitable testing experience. This includes:**



Those requiring **accommodations** such as physical equipment, additional time or support.



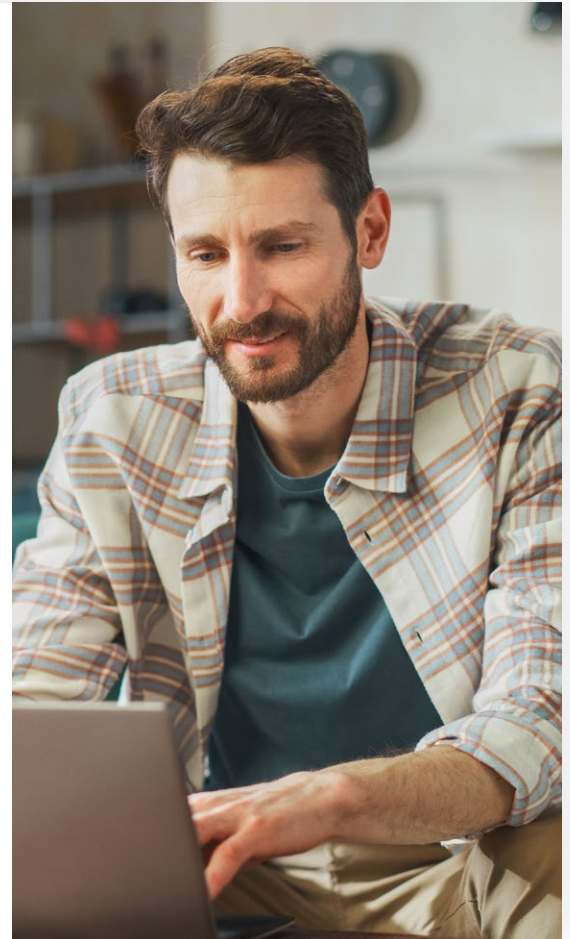
Accessible **pricing structures** that research every location and set fees that are appropriate to the local population.



Reasonable **eligibility requirements** so no individual or group of test takers is unfairly excluded.

---

Throughout the test taker journey, this demands an unwavering focus on DE&I. Starting with an accessible scheduling platform that is easy to navigate and understand, through to an easy-to-use test delivery platform.



# Power of choice

Multi-modal testing gives your test takers options, to ensure your tests are as accessible and inclusive as possible:



**Remote testing** with secure online proctoring. So a test taker doesn't need to travel to a test centre.



**In-person testing** at a secure test centre in an accessible location. So they have access to the infrastructure and technology they need to take a test.

Offering options when it comes to test delivery modalities will ensure your tests are as accessible and inclusive as possible. With equity across secure test centres and remote proctoring, your test takers will be assessed fairly on a level playing field.



Where it meets the specific requirements of a testing program, continuous testing can also give test takers the flexibility to take a test at a time that suits them best.



"We offer an approach where the test taker can select the modality that works best for them. Whether that is a test centre or with online proctoring. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure those experiences are as comparable as possible. So that our clients' interests – and the interests of their test takers – are always protected."

**Heather Richards**

Vice President, Client Success, PSI



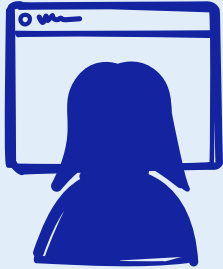
# Keep it simple

---



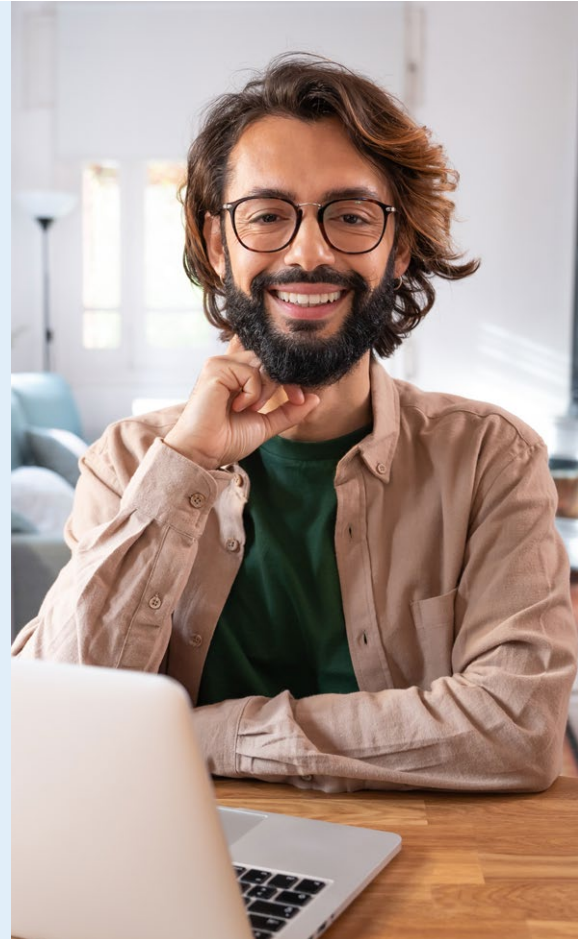
## Before test day...

Single sign-on makes test booking simple and a pull API means test date and time availability is always up to date. Functionality that makes it easy to request and book accommodations is also essential during test booking.



## On remote test day...

DE&I as a priority continues into test day with a convenient and flexible online proctoring platform. This balances test security with the test taker experience – and the needs of individual test takers. Whether that's the flexibility of scheduling on demand, no remote access by online proctors to a test taker's device to protect their privacy, or the quality assurance of weekly proctor audits.





## For testing in-person...



Similarly, if a test taker prefers – or needs – to take a test in person, your test centre network needs to be both accessible and secure.

Physical equipment should be provided to accommodate test taker needs. For example, special monitors, adjustable height tables and keyboards, alternative mouse and keyboard types, and noise-canceling headphones. Accommodations might also include Braille and oral examinations, a separate room or dedicated proctor for individualised testing, extended time or a reader for a test.

These facilities and accommodations can be combined with rigorous checks and audits to ensure all DE&I policies and protocols are adhered to.

# Our survey said

We know our approach is working, with test taker survey results in the last 6 months showing:

**98%**

of test takers rate the layout of the test centre as good or excellent.

**91%**

of test takers rate the convenience of the date and time of their test as good or excellent.





# Continuous improvements to DE&I

Quality assurance measures will not only ensure you stay focused on DE&I principles day to day, but also that you take every opportunity for continuous improvement.

# Data forensics



Improvements can come from the insights provided by data forensics services, that use psychometric analysis of testing data, alongside complete transparency in account metrics.

For example, data forensics of test results can reveal unintentional bias in the test content.

**Differential Analyses (DIF)** assesses whether certain demographic groups perform differently on specific test items.



Items identified that might disadvantage certain groups and require further investigation.



Disparities addressed by implementing targeted interventions or adjustments.



## Test taker surveys



Test taker satisfaction surveys from a particular test centre might show that the accommodations provided are making it harder for test takers to demonstrate their knowledge. For example, noise or visual distractions in the testing room. Facilities can then be improved to make the testing experience more equitable and inclusive.



## Regular review of research and best practices

In addition to Quality Assurance and data measures, at PSI we have an internal Centre of Excellence that meets every other week to review research and best practices. This serves to both support our products and guide / enhance our own DE&I programs and initiatives. The members of the Centre of Excellence represent multiple countries from around the globe and a variety of disciplines and backgrounds.




# Marketing for DE&I



As well as developing and delivering tests with DE&I in mind, it's important to market your tests to a diverse audience, in an inclusive way.

Representation matters. Advertising or promotional activity should showcase diversity in your campaigns and the images you use. You can't be what you can't see, so this might involve including currently underrepresented populations.



Much as you do in your test content, your marketing content and language should also be inclusive. This involves using appropriate:

- **Person-first** and identity-first language, for example “person who uses a wheelchair” rather than “wheelchair-bound”.
- **Identity-related** terms around age, disability status, sexual orientation, gender diversity, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and culture. For example, “visually impaired” rather than “visually challenged”.



## Audits

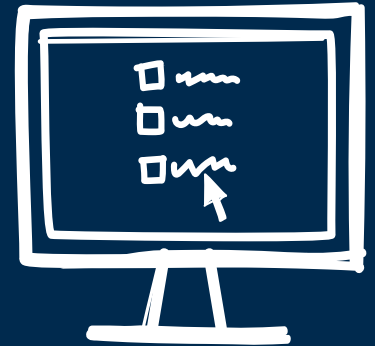
It's good practice to regularly audit your website and other marketing materials for diversity, accessibility and inclusive language. The American Psychological Association has useful [ED&I Inclusive Language Guidelines](#) for more information.

**View guidelines**



**Ask  
your testing  
provider**

about their own DE&I





**Of course, if your testing provider doesn't have a diverse workforce, along with an equitable and inclusive culture, then your tests won't be diverse, equitable and inclusive.**

It's important to have the DE&I systems and processes outlined in this guide in place throughout the assessment lifecycle, but that's not enough. What about your testing provider's employee lifecycle?

**Here are some questions  
you can use to assess  
a testing provider's  
commitment to DE&I**

and how this will be  
reflected across the  
assessment lifecycle.

1

## Recruitment and selection



- Do they use practices that promote a more diverse candidate pool?
- Do they use proven fair and job-related selection techniques during the recruitment process?

2

## Learning and development



- When people are in role, do performance management programs include embracing diversity as a key performance indicator?
- Are specific goals set for all members of the leadership team around DE&I?

3



## Internal communication

- Does the testing provider connect diverse employees in conversations about their differences to promote understanding?
- Is this supported by communications tools such as a website, e-newsletter, or events on related topics?

4



## Measurement and data

**As well as using data in your testing programs, does the testing provider use data analytics to measure progress on ED&I. For example:**

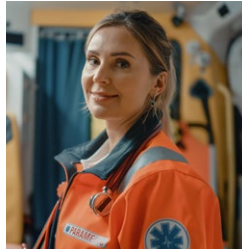
- Identify underrepresented groups at all levels and functions.
- Identify the variance in employee experience across diversity categories.
- Track promotions, pay, performance reviews and learning opportunities to identify / rectify existing bias.



# Conclusion

**Our clients appreciate that we are a testing partner with a commitment to DE&I.**

Of course, an effective approach to DE&I must be individualised to specific work settings and organisations. However, a consistent comment from clients is how much importance they place on our partnership approach, flexibility and transparency. We always try to come back with, **“Yes, we can do that”**.



**Our goal is to support  
you and your test takers  
– whatever you need  
to succeed.**



# Your trusted testing partner

Every day our clients support millions of people to realise their dreams, reach their potential, and improve their life chances. They care about their test takers – and we share that responsibility.

Our unwavering focus is on delivering frictionless and fair test taker experiences, without compromising test integrity, through...

## Secure test delivery

- Authorised global **test centre** network.
- Secure and scalable **remote testing** and live and Record & Review **online proctoring**.
- Flexible **multi-modal** test delivery.
- Testing **windows or continuous testing** on-demand.

## Rigorous test development

- Legally defensible and **valid test content**.
- **Job analysis** and test content specifications.
- **Subject Matter Expert** (SME) recruitment, training and management
- Secure **item authoring, banking and test generation** software.

## Expertise in testing science

- Experienced **psychometricians**.
- Specialist **test developers**.
- **Data forensics** and web crawling.

**Our willingness to listen and adapt means clients can either benefit from a full testing service, or access solutions at any stage of their testing journey.**

We understand every test is about more than the result. It's about a dream. A dream the test taker believes is worth striving for. And we believe that too. Their dreams deserve trusted science, technology and operational expertise. They deserve PSI.

# Dreams... Deserve PSI

---





**Connect with an  
expert today.**

**psiexams.com**



**PSI Services LLC**